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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
IN RE THE APPLICATION OF:

Cotton et al.

Application No: 09/783,367

Filing Date: February 14, 2001

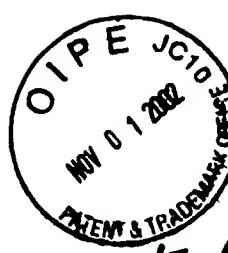
APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR
ADJUSTING THE PRE-LOAD OF
A SPRING

Grp. Art. Unit: 2834

Examiner: Medley, P.

Date: October 17, 2002

Atty. Dkt. No: 99-617



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RESPONSE TO FIRST OFFICE ACTION

In response to the Office Action dated July 22, 2002,
please consider the following amendment and remarks.

In the claims

Please cancel claims 1-19 without prejudice.

Please add new claims 20-31 as follows:

20. A spring biased mechanism comprising:
a moveable element;
a biasing spring operably coupled to bias said
element toward a predetermined position with a spring preload
force;

a spring preload force adjuster including a
piezoelectric device operably coupled to said spring; and
said spring preload force being at least partially
a function of a voltage applied to said piezoelectric device.

21. The mechanism of claim 20 including an
electrical actuator operably coupled to said moveable element
in opposition to said biasing spring.